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A SERMON

Preach'd before the

UNIVERSITY

OF

OXFORD,

At St. *MARY's,*

ON

ACT SUNDAY in the AFTERNOON,

JULY 8. 1733.

By THOMAS SECKER, L.L.D. Prebendary of *Durham*, Rector of St. *James's Westminster*, and Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majesty.

Publish'd at the Request of the Vice-Chancellor, and Heads of Houses.

OXFORD,

Printed for *Samuel Wilmot*, and are to be sold by Messieurs *Knapton* and *Innys* in *Ludgate* Street, *T. Astley*, and *I. Crownfield* in St. *Paul's* Church-Yard. *London*. 1733.

A

SERMON

Preach'd before the

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OXFORD,

At ST. MARY's

ON

ACT SUNDAY, by the Archbishop

of YORK.

By THOMAS SECKER, LL. D. Prebendary of Rochester, Rector of St. James's Westminster, and Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majesty.

Published at the Request of the Vice-Chancellor, and Heads of Houses.

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Printed for Samuel Wilmot, and are to be sold by Messrs. Knapton and Innys in Lincoln's Inn, Mr. Tonson in Russell Street, Covent Garden, and J. Crowdell in St. Paul's Church Yard. 1738.

Deut. XXXII. 46, 47.

And he said unto them, Set your hearts unto all the words which I testifie among you this day, which ye shall command your children to observe to do, all the words of this law.

For it is not a vain thing for you; because it is your life; and through this thing ye shall prolong your days in the land whether ye go over Jordan to possess it.

THESE Words contain the last exhortation, which *Moses* the great founder of the *Jewish* State gave his Countrymen, on the very day wherein he had notice of his approaching death. He had freed them, with infinite danger to himself, from *Egyptian* Tyranny, and the worse bondage of Idolatry and Superstition: He had received for them, from God's own mouth, such laws of life as in their circumstances were most conducive to virtue and happiness: These he had delivered to his people, established on the surest foundation of regard; affectionate reverence to the Object of all duty, and Author of all good: He had laboured, with infinite patience, thro' a long course of years, to cultivate in them this important principle of religious obedience: And now drawing

near to the close of a life spent in their service, he recommends it again; first, with all the force of a most persuasive Eloquence; and afterwards by every charm that Poetry it self could add; setting happiness and misery before them, in an Ode of divine sublimity and spirit, which they are commanded by Heaven to learn themselves and teach their Posterity. This therefore he communicates in a solemn manner to the whole Congregation, as the conclusion of all his cares for them; and then takes his final leave in the Exhortation of the text, confirming once more at his death the importance of those precepts he had been giving them through his whole life. *Set your hearts &c.*

Their own observance of Gods law was securing the felicity of one generation only: but educating their Children in Religion and Virtue, this was perpetuating blessings to each part of the Society and to the whole: lasting prosperity and peace, in the good land they were going to possess; and in that *better Country*, of which it was an Emblem, *length of days for evermore.*

The words afford then a just occasion for speaking

I. Of the advantages of right Education; and,

II. The duty of endeavouring that these advantages may be obtained.

I. The advantages, and indeed necessity of right Education.

Other creatures arrive, without their own care, at the small perfection they are capable of, and there stop:

ſtop: But the whole of mans exiſtence, that appears, is a ſtate of diſcipline and progreſſion. Youth is his preparation for maturer years: This whole life, for another to come. Nature gives the abilities to improve, but the actual improvement, we are to have the pleaſure and the merit of giving our ſelves and one another. Some minds indeed, as ſome ſoils, may be fruitful without cultivation; others, barren with it: but the general neceſſity is the ſame in both caſes; and in both, the richeſt and moſt capable of producing good fruit will be overrun, if neglected, with the rankeſt and worſt weeds.

Now the only univerſal proviſion, that can be in this reſpect, Chriſtianity hath bleſſed the world with, by introducing a ſtated method of inſtruction, unknown before; which, joyned with the Parents private care, is, to the generality of mankind, ſufficient for the purpoſes of intellectual and moral improvement. But to perſons of more extenſive influence, a more particular and appropriated inſtitution is neceſſary, for the worlds ſake, as well as their own. This, with regard to the teachers of Religion, men almoſt without exception acknowledge: but too commonly forget it in another caſe, of no leſs importance; theirs I mean, whoſe authority is to inforce the laws of conduct, and whoſe example to lead the way in life. Here ſometimes a wrong care, often an imperfect one, is taken by the fondeſt Parents. The outward accompliſhments and decencies of behaviour they teach them with great exactneſs, and do well: but then, without the leaſt farther proviſion, ſend them abroad into the School of the World, there to

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learn what they can. The conſequence is, what muſt naturally be expected: Trifles and follies, ever readieſt at hand, and beſt ſuited to the unjudging mind, get firſt into poſſeſſion; and, in many, leave place for nothing elſe to enter. Such, unqualified for the valuable employments of life, muſt loſe their days in the low amuſements of a falſe and effeminate politeneſs: hoping for no higher a character, than a ſet of creatures, equally contemptible, can give one another by mutual admiration; and happy after all, if they chance to preſerve an innocent worthleſſneſs.

But ſuppoſe room left for ſome attention to knowledge, not even the forms of decent carriage, however obvious things, are fully learnt without regular application. What ſort of acquaintance then with ſcience muſt that be, which is pick'd up occaſionally and by accident? A thorough one indeed we muſt judge it, were the firſt appearance to determine us; that air of ſufficiency, with which a perſon thus educated for the moſt part delivers his ſentiments. But if we examine, as the world will, what is under this appearance to ſupport it; then a mind is diſcover'd, thoughtleſsly perſwaded of its own knowledge, where it is very ignorant; and affecting knowledge, even though it is conſcious of having none: firſt making haſtily whatever determination is faſhionable, about queſtions half underſtood, and not at all conſider'd, be their importance what it will; and then going on immediately to act upon this determination, without the leaſt diffidence, or the leaſt thought what the laws of human actions are: unmov'd by reaſon, and ſcorning it; but changing frequently on mere fancy,

fancy, and fluctuating through life without rule or guide, from the forward extravagancies of a profligate youth, to the end of an early and despicable old age.

The benefits of converſation greatly depend on the previous attainments, both of thoſe who are ſuppoſed to communicate knowledge and to receive it. If therefore inſtruction be neglected, converſation will grow trifling; if perverted, dangerous. Still acquaintance with the world, however corrupted, may be an uſefull part of Education; but then it muſt be the laſt. It gives a beautifull poliſh: but of this the beſt prepar'd mind will be the moſt ſuſceptible. It teaches many things: but good or bad, according as the learner is qualified to diſtinguiſh. He, whom improved good ſenſe hath enabled to obſerve upon common practice, will extract wiſdom and virtue from the vices and follies of mankind. But ſuch as are ignorant, and capable only of imitating, will of courſe admire the worſt of what they ſee; and be the more effectually ruined, the more they aim to be accompliſh'd. It is therefore a mercileſs thing, to throw out poor creatures, without any foundation laid in them of what is right, to ſhift for themſelves where ſo much wrong is to be learnt.

Regular cultivation of the underſtanding then is what good education begins with. The earlieſt branch of this, acquaintance with uſefull languages, unlocks the treaſures of ancient learning, and makes the improvements of every age and climate our own. Then the politer parts of literature moſt agreeably open the faculties, and form the laſt, of young perſons; adorn

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and endear the conversation of our riper years; give a grace to wisdom and virtue, relieve the fatigue of our busy hours, and elegantly fill up the leisure of our vacant ones. At the same time the art of just reasoning opportunely comes in, to guide the dictates of imagination and direct its force; to fix the foundations of science, ascertain the degrees of probability, and unveil specious error. With this guide we proceed securely. Knowledge of nature opens the Universe to our view, enables us to judge worthily of the constitution of things, secures us from the weakness of vulgar superstitions, and contributes, in many ways, to the health and security, the convenience and pleasure of human life. If from hence we go on to survey mankind, a contemplation of their different states in different ages, and especially of their ancient regulations and laws, the publick wisdom of brave and great nations, will furnish variety of useful reflections to the mind; often teaching us to improve our own condition, often to be happy in it.

It must be obvious, how rational an entertainment these things are, and how useful materials they furnish, to improve and perfect that prudence and good sense, which not only carries us through the business of life, but gives relish and stability to the pleasures of it. If then knowledge ought to be attain'd, the way to it ought to be made easy; by removing difficulties, cautioning against mistakes, and leading forwards in a right method. Above all, application ought to be secured, by the authority of a prudent instructor, and emulation excited, by a number of fellow-learners.

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But if Education ſtop here, it hath only given abilities and powers, the direction of which to right or wrong purpoſes is greatly uncertain ſtill. He that knows not the proper uſe of his own being; *what is man and whereto ſerveth he, what is his good and what is his evil*; may eaſily employ his other knowledge ſo, as to be much the worſe for it. This inquiry then is the important one. Various methods of conducting life preſent themſelves; contradictory inclinations demand to be gratified: the conflict is painful; the end of it may be more ſo: which way is right, and which ſhall we take? Now there is a ſcience, that can direct us here: can ſhew us an inward principle, indued with native authority to govern all the reſt; obedience to which gives a ſteddy aim and ſelf-approbation to our conduct, beſtows on us the trueſt pleaſures of life and delivers us from its foreſt evils. Then if we look abroad, Morals are the great foundation of mutual ſecurity, the only one of eſteem and friendſhip amongſt men. A worthy character, though otherwiſe of ſmall accompliſhments, will always make an amiable figure in ſociety, and be a valuable part of it: whereas, without a virtuous heart, the ſuperior abilities of the great man will only render him a more extenſive miſchief; and the deceitful agreeableneſs of the gay man qualify him to miſlead, betray and ruin more intirely thoſe he converſes with: till increaſing wickedneſs at laſt produces univerſal miſery. For though a conſtitution ſinking under vice may preſerve for ſome time the florid look of health; yet inward ſtrength and laſting vigour are what nothing but virtue, publick and private,

can give to any people. This is that true wiſdom, *in whoſe right hand is length of days; and in her left, riches and honour.*

Now the foundations of morality are indeed laid by nature, both in the reaſon and affections of mankind: but reaſon may be inattentive, and affections depraved, till the beſt part of our inward frame be in appearance worn out of it. And, were even thoſe of righter minds left each to form their private ſyſtem; tenderneſs for their own failings, or prejudice for thoſe of the world, would often lead them into imperfect notions and wrong practice. A regular inſtitution then in this moſt important ſcience is one indiſpenſable branch of liberal education: to repreſent the ſtrict connexions of its ſeveral parts; pull off the diſguiſes which vice affects to wear; ſhew the reſtraints of virtue to end in real freedom; and make ſtrong the proof, that *knowledge of wickedneſs is not wiſdom; neither at any time the counſel of ſinners, prudence.*

And when ſhould the ſcience of life be taught, but in the beginning of life: whilſt the natural regard to right and truth, the only inward reſtraint of incautious youth, remains uncorrupt; and the few ſeeds of vice lie looſely ſcatter'd on the ſurface of the mind; much harder to be removed, when once they have taken root, and twiſted themſelves ſtrongly about the heart. This therefore is the favourable opportunity, in which authority and reaſon muſt exert at once their joynt force. For diſcipline without inſtruction is mere Tyranny: and inſtruction without diſcipline, little better than uſeleſs talk. Things owned to be fit

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and good are neglected, becauſe diſagreeable; things evidently hurtful purſued, for preſent pleaſure. Here authority comes in to the aid of Reaſon; inforces virtuous application; reſtrains vicious indulgences; tempers the warmth of youth; prepares us for the future ſubordinations of life; conducts us ſafe through the unſeen dangers of our moſt dangerous time; and then by gentle degrees withdraws its influence, as the power of ſelf-government grows up. Where want of this care leaves young perſons too ſoon in the worſt of hands, their own; it is dreadful to ſee, what irretrievable miſeries in the very beginning of their courſe they plunge into. And therefore, the more liberty they are afterwards to enjoy, the more prudent, though not ſtricter, reſtraint they ſhould be under at firſt; and enter'd by ſlow ſteps into the world at large, with all poſſible cautions given them of the hazards they are going upon, and (God knows) have little reaſon to be eager for.

But the moſt ſerious part of Education is wanting ſtill: the part which leads us, by the eſteem of moral excellence, to honour and love that being, in whom the perfection of it dwells; and extends our inward ſenſe of duty, ſuggeſted firſt by the low and ſhort-lived relations between us and our fellow-creatures, to the higheſt poſſible and eternal Object of it, the Creator and Ruler of this Univerſe. He by whoſe pleaſure we are, from whoſe favour all we enjoy and hope for comes, according to whoſe determination our whole exiſtence ſhall be happy or miſerable, is not ſurely one we are unconcerned with. And, however a baſe nature may value it ſelf on the impotent

affectation of slighting God; every worthy mind will delight to express that veneration and pay that obedience, which are due to him who is the Lord of all: due by every strongest claim, whether unassisted reason discover the general laws of his moral kingdom; or infinite wisdom, the best judge of our circumstances, condescend to adapt to them farther obligations. It is indeed the sense of our living under His government and care, that makes our condition of being desireable. Religion, filling the mind with that Object it naturally seeks, a sovereign protector infinitely wise and good, effectually excludes all superstitious terrors; and, far from depressing the tendereſt spirit, exalts us into every thought and every hope, that is great and noble. Turbulence of passions and obstinacy of self-will, these are the things that tear and weaken the Soul: Reverence of God, by awing them into composure, strengthens every inward principle that ought to be strong; and if it prunes the luxuriances, promotes by so doing the vigour of the mind. Religion comprehends at once every motive, both of virtue and of private interest, that can either direct or support the heart in every part of conduct; joyns in perpetual union our duty and our happiness; and makes the universal scheme of things consistent, beautiful and good.

Surely then, Principles of such a tendency ought to have an early and diligent cultivation in every breast; but theirs especially, whose rank or profession will make it of the most publick consequence. They who object against this care, as instilling prejudices, should consider, that virtue, honour, decency, are pre-

prejudices juſt of the ſame ſort; and think what would follow, were men to enter upon life free from the bias of any one good quality. But in truth, God himſelf, not man, hath planted theſe juſt prepoſſeſſions in the heart: and all Education does, is to favour their growth. Religion, and the evidences for it, may indeed be unfairly repreſented by its Teachers: And what part of knowledge may not? But are only the Teachers of Religion capable of miſrepreſenting it? Hath not every vicious man as ſtrong a motive to incline him againſt it; as even thoſe maintained by it have, to incline them in its favour? Hath not fondneſs of novelty, and affectation of ſuperior ſenſe and learning, as great influence on ſome perſons, as credulity can have on others? Do we not every day ſee men determine poſitively againſt Religion, who are known never once to have thought of it in earneſt; and attack it by all the unfair arts in the world, whilſt they themſelves are declaiming againſt ſuch arts? Do we not ſee them even triumph in the thought of its being falſe, though the everlaſting happineſs of every good man depends upon its truth? And are theſe the worthy ſpirits, to whoſe tutoring young perſons are to be deliver'd over in their native ignorance, for fear of prejudices? Or is it not on all accounts wiſe and fit, that the mind, whilſt untainted with evil communication or vice, ſhould have the moſt important of all truths comfirmed to it by proper arguments; and be formed to the right and happy temper, of chearful obedience to the greateſt and beſt of beings, *the father of God and our lives.*

Since therefore inſtruction of youth in Religion, vir-

virtue and knowledge, appears attended with ſo many advantages; it follows,

II. That all perſons concerned ſhould endeavour, with united care, in their ſeveral ſtations, that theſe advantages may be effectually obtained; eſpecially in the places dedicated to that purpoſe.

The publick care, in this reſpect, we muſt ever gratefully own, continu'd through a long ſucceſſion of our Princes; and flouriſhing ſtill in its height, under the Adminiſtration of a King, zealous for the happineſs of his people, and reſolute to maintain all the rights of all his ſubjects. Next to whoſe aſſur'd and experienc'd Protection we cannot but thankfully acknowledge the gracious Munificence of his Royal Conſort; therefore bountiful to Religion and learning, becauſe ſhe moſt intimately knows their value, and moſt affectionately eſteems them.

Secure then of the publick favour, to whatever is connected with the publick good; we have only their attention to ſollicite who are perſonally intereſted: Parents, or whoever ſupply their place; The conductors of Education; and, The young perſons to be educated.

To you, who are Parents, nature it ſelf hath given a tender concern for your childrens wellfare, as your own; and reminds you juſtly, that, as you have brought them into the dangers of life, your buſineſs it is that they get well through them. Now the only proviſion commonly attended to, of wealth and honours, can never make happineſs; unleſs the mind, on which all depends, be taught to enjoy them properly. Fortune, without this, will but lead them to more abandon'd ſallies of extravagance; and rank expoſe them to more

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publick cenſure. Education then is the great care you are intruſted with; ſcarce more for their ſakes, than your own. You may be negligent of your ſons inſtruction: but it is on you as well as himſelf, that his ignorance and contemptibleneſs will bring both reproach and inconvenience. You may be regardleſs of his morals: but you may alſo be the perſon who will at laſt the moſt ſeverely feel his want of them. You may be indifferent about his Religion: but remember, dutifulneſs to you is one great precept of Religion: and all the reſt promote ſuch habits, as you may bitterly repent, when it is too late, your omiſſion to cultivate in him; and live and die miſerable on his account, whom a little timely care had made your joy and honour.

Parents therefore ſhould always be friends to Education, and to places of Education: ſhould wiſh well to them; and never, without great reaſon, think ill of them. The enemies of Religion and Virtue, an increaſing number, will of courſe be enemies to thoſe who teach them; and the more ſo, the more carefully they teach them. The enemies to either part of our happy conſtitution, will look with an evil eye on eſtabliſhments, deſign'd for the ſupport of both. More private motives will excite injurious treatment of them from ſome perſons. And even thoſe of better meaning may be engaged, by miſinformations and prejudices, to paſs harſh judgments and ſay unfriendly things. But reaſonable men will always diſtinguiſh, by what perſons, on what grounds, with what temper and what views, diſadvantageous characters are given, or reports raiſed. They will alſo conſider

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that the unhappy diviſions of this nation cannot but have cauſed, on all ſides, in length of time, ſome degree of wrong opinion and wrong conduct towards one another; mutual jealouſies and miſunderſtandings between thoſe, whoſe intereſts, and whoſe intentions, were in general the ſame: differences, which it muſt be ruinous to heighten, dangerous to continue, uſeleſs to paſs judgment in; but moſt important to reconcile, by ſuch conduct on every hand, as may give no ſuſpicion of ill deſign, but all proofs of good. Friendly methods will not fail to unite the hearts of men; and make them ſuſceptible of mutual advice and improvement, aſſiſtance and benefit. Whoever will view the ſeats of learning, with theſe conſiderations preſent to his mind, will judge favourably concerning them; and not only admire the pious bounty of our anceſtors, who dedicated theſe delightful retreats to knowledge and virtue, founded theſe beautiful ſtructures, enrich'd them with ſuch amazing treaſures of literature, and provided ſo nobly for the accommodation of fit perſons to enjoy and communicate the inſtruction of them; but be thankful for the many and great bleſſings they have convey'd to every age, and will, we hope, derive to lateſt poſterity.

Ideas of perfection are viſionary things: but look into fact, and where will thoſe, who inveigh againſt the Education of our Univerſities recommend a more improving one? The indulgent ſoftneſs of the parents family is mighty apt, at beſt, to give young perſons a moſt unhappy effeminateneſs: the governour, if he hath abilities, hath ſcarce ever authority to inforce diligence; want of rivals keeps the mind languid; and

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upon the whole, ſeldom any thing conſiderable comes out. If now the contrary method be taken, of ſending them, raw and uninſtructed, to viſit foreign countries: what improvement will minds unprepared for improvement make there? As to Religion; the diſuſe of frequenting its exerciſes, and the daily view of its corruptions, will be in danger of effacing all regard to it. With reſpect to morals; in the midſt of ſo great temptation, ſo little reſtraint, and ſo general bad example; it muſt be a high degree of virtue, that can keep it ſelf in countenance. Then for ſuch opportunities of inſtruction, as different laws, manners and cuſtoms, may be ſuppoſed to give; theſe require a mind trained up before hand to attention and judgment: on all others they will be juſt as likely to make wrong impreſſions as right, if they make any. But indeed what impreſſions of all kinds are uſually made, and how far the improvements brought home anſwer the national expence for them, lies within the compaſs of daily obſervation.

If then, in the next place, we compare at leaſt foreign Univerſities with our own: Is their Theology worthier of God, more conformable to reaſon and primitive Chriſtianity; is their Philoſophy juſter and more ſolid, leſs full of imagination and hypotheſis; than that of our great countrymen, whoſe names I need not ſuggeſt? Will the ornamental rewards of learning be more fitly beſtowed, where no time previous to the application for them is required? Will induſtry be more univerſal, without any inſpection over it; behaviour more regular, without any rule ſet to it; than where young perſons are formed into orderly ſo-

cieties, diſtinguiſhed by proper habits, reſtrained to proper hours, obliged to proper ſtudies, and watched over with continual care? Miſcarriages after all will happen in ſuch numbers of ſuch an age. But the general good order that reigns here, to moſt foreigners, not the worſt judges in this caſe, appears incredible when related, and very ſurpriſing when ſeen.

It remains only to wiſh, what there never was more hope of; that, as our Univerſities have long excelled all others, they may continually improve upon themſelves. But parents muſt either contribute their own ſhare to this, or not expect their children ſhould be great. If indolence and luxury be taught them by bad example, or prejudice againſt every thing ſerious and praiſeworthy by bad converſation, before they come hither; if they come with little or no charge given about regularity and application, but licence be claimed for them in proportion to their quality; or if, after the mere form of a ſhort confinement here, they are let immediately looſe, to wear off by negligence and profligateneſs the few ſlight good impreſſions that could be made; what room hath the parent to hope for improvement, or complain if none be found?

But let him be carefull in his own duty firſt; then the perſons, to whom he commits his child afterwards, will undertake with ſome comfort an office, laborious and important at all times; but particularly ſo in an age of uncommon corruption: when the expectations of good men are more than ever fix'd on their diſcharging this truſt well; and their failure will give bad ones the double joy, of ſeeing wickedneſs flouriſh and accuſing them for it. Complaints indeed of unjuſt accuſa-

tions were never better grounded: but complaints alone will do little good; and even deserved returns of bitterness may do much harm. The only remedy is, that by well doing we put to silence the unreasonableness of ill persons, and secure the protection of those who mean well.

The Educator of youth therefore will first perfect himself in each needful qualification, and then apply to forming others. In every science he will joyn the discoveries of later times with such instruction, as may render the learning of former ages intelligible; and prudently direct the more particular attention of each person to such things, as may chiefly relate to their future part in life.

The foundations of Religion he will lay deep and strong: recommending the great articles of it, not to the passions of those under his care, by warmth and vehemence; but to their reason and faith, by just explications and conclusive arguments: neither loading Revelation with unauthoriz'd Doctrines and needless difficulties: nor yeilding up the least real part of it, to defend the rest; nor altering the least, to give it a more plausible appearance. A disputing and cavilling temper he will endeavour to restrain; but will treat with all tenderness the doubts of an ingenuous mind; and ever encourage that sacred regard to Truth, which makes men worthy of esteem, even whilst they err, and is the great security of their returning into the right way. He will take fit opportunity of shewing, how closely a due regard to the teachers of Religion and Virtue is connected with the practice of both. But the persons, whose employment teaching them is to be, he

will ſtudiouſly warn, that the only way of ſecuring this regard is, by uſefull and exemplary lives, prudent and inoffenſive conduct; and ſo hearty a friendſhip to all juſt and reaſonable liberty, as may give them unſuſpected authority to oppoſe the diſſolute licentiouſneſs, that in vain affects to wear its name.

To Civil Government he will conſcientiouſly teach that dutiful obedience and honour, which chriſtianity requires all ſubjects to pay; and which the happieſt ſubjects in the world ought to pay with the chearfulleſt gratitude. He will diſcourage with all poſſible care, the rage of party zeal; which warm and unexperienc'd minds too often miſtake for publick ſpirit. Admitted in this fair diſguiſe, it poſſeſſes the whole man; tinctures his way of thinking on almoſt every ſubject; leads him to hate and injure worthy perſons, to admire and aſſociate amongſt very bad ones; with whom this immoral temper ſtands in the ſtead of all merit, whilſt indeed it hinders the acquiring of any. As life goes on, theſe evils increaſe: which all the world complains of, but unhappily indulges at the ſame time; inſtead of each curbing, on his own ſide, the eagerneſs and keenneſs of ſo malevolent a principle. Young perſons ſhould therefore be reminded, that the ſeats of learning are purpoſely ſeparated from the buſy ſcenes of life; which the time for engaging in will come but too ſoon: mean while the generous ardor of youth ſhould be exerted in making the preparation of uſeful knowledge and virtuous habits; but ever temper'd with ſuch mildneſs and diffidence concerning matters which they need not judge of yet, as they will every day ſee more neceſſary in order to judge and act right.

This is indeed one part of morals: and on every other part the Director of Education will have an attentive eye. Even the ſallies of a well-meant zeal he will prudently moderate, when they give Religion a gloomy appearance or add to it a needleſs burden. But much more ſtrictly will he guard againſt the oppoſite extreme of libertiniſm and profaneneſs: labouring to keep up, not only an outward form of regularity, but a ſerious awe of God, and ſenſe of duty in every mind; watching over each tendency to vice, and conſidering willful neglect of application as a dangerous kind of immorality. In order to this great end of preſerving morals, he will preſerve and countenance, as far as it remains poſſible, that temperance of living, ſimplicity of appearance and frugality of expence, which are uſually brought hither, and ſo peculiarly ſuit this inſtitution; keep the mind in fit temper for the exerciſe of its faculties; and defend it from the corruptions of luxury and vanity; lay the foundations of health and prudence in thoſe of higher rank, and prepare others to be virtuous and eaſy in whatever ſtations may prove their ſhare.

It remains only now, that the perſon, of whom all this care is taken, ſhould know and improve his own happineſs. Too many there are, that ſet out upon the important journey of life, without a skillful, or perhaps a friendly hand, to conduct them thro' the difficulties of the untried and dangerous way. Theſe are greatly excuſable in their faults, and pitiable in their miſeries. But of you God and man will expect attainments, that may bear proportion to the advantages you are bleſt with. Nature engages your parents; duty, honour and intereſt, your inſtructors, to conſult your welfare:

which

which they desire as much as your selves, and understand better. Restrain therefore and apply your selves as they direct; tho' you not only feel it painful, but see it not yet beneficial: and trust those, who have all imaginable claim to be trusted; that by quick degrees, the pain will wear off and the benefit be evident.

Their province, who are devoted to the service of Religion, will be to appear, perhaps after a very short preparation, in an age strongly prejudic'd against them and their function: sure objects, without merit, of contempt and hatred; but, with it, capable still of being esteem'd and usefull. You see what care and thought this situation requires; especially considering the grounds Religion stands upon, and the chief Doctrines it teaches. Fear not therefore making free inquiry into every thing. Others inquire with bad intention: if you do it not with good, you will want true learning, to oppose against the false and half-learning of unbelievers. Only begin not your inquiry, 'till you are qualified: and end it not, 'till you have consider'd matters fully. Young minds, and often the most generous of them, are apt to pursue truth with an impatience, that occasions their missing it. Nothing ought ever to stand against full evidence, well weighed: but many things may induce those, who have yet had little time for thought, to think again, and be diffident in the mean while. For not only the world too commonly imputes to a man, all his life, the indigested notions of his early years; but persons list themselves by positive talk, and then cannot retreat. With this caution and due method, diligence will go far in acquiring knowledge. But knowledge is only one part of what must be attended to. The

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conduct, even of perſons younger days, will be treaſur'd up in many a malicious memory to their future diſadvantage: and, though an affectation of untimely gravity ſits ill, yet innocence and piety are the duties of every age. They eſpecially, whoſe profeſſion will make a ſtricter abſtinence from doubtful and imprudent pleaſures expected of them hereafter, will find it much the ſafeſt and eaſieſt to begin now; and, by an uniform life, grow regularly up into that eſteem, which their future character will require to ſupport it.

And tho' neither the ſame diligence of application, nor ſuch accuracy of conduct, may appear neceſſary in thoſe of higher rank; yet an improv'd underſtanding muſt be an advantage, and the want of it a blemiſh, proportionably conſpicuous, as the ſtation either appears in is publick: and the choice, how life ſhall be ſpent, is always important in the ſame degree, as the perſons are who make it. Such therefore, of all others, ſhould not take it haſtily for granted, that a vicious courſe is right. To begin with virtue at leaſt, 'till fair inquiry rejects it, is evidently the ſafe part. No one ever bitterly condemn'd himſelf that he had ſpent his younger years ſoberly: many have, that they did not. Then, ſome degrees of vice are own'd to produce miſery: and every vice leads on to worſe degrees of itſelf, and variety of others. Or, tho' one could depend on ſuffering no preſent harm; yet he cannot fail of doing a great deal: and a man would not chuſe, that the chief traces he leaves behind him, to mark out his paſſage through life, ſhould be ſo many injuries done his fellow-creatures. At leaſt no one would venture upon this, 'till he were ſure there is no ſuperior inſpector of his conduct.

Now

Now there cannot be certainty against Religion; and there are ſuch evidences for it, as muſt require more than a few ſlight cavils, or bold jeſts to overturn them. A careful examination then it juſtly demands. And if upon ſuch examination it prove true, as undoubtedly it will; remember it is a moſt ſerious truth, in which the foremoſt of mankind is equally concern'd with the meaneſt. Therefore, in a caſe of ſuch moment, let no falſe ſhame, nor favourite paſſion prevail over you; but *give your hearts early to the Lord that made you.* Lay the foundation of your lives right here; and build on it whatever is juſt and good, worthy and noble, 'till the ſtructure be compleat in moral beauty. The world, which you are entring into, lies in wait with variety of temptations. Unfavourable ſentiments of Religion will ſoon be ſuggeſted to you; and all the ſnares of luxury, falſe honour and intereſt, ſpread in your way; which with moſt of your rank are too ſucceſsful, and to many fatal. Happy the few, that in any part of life become ſenſible of their errors; and, with painful reſolution, tread back the wrong ſteps they have taken. But happieſt of men is he, who, by an even courſe of right conduct from the firſt, hath at once avoided the miſeries of ſin, the ſorrows of repentance, and the difficulties of virtue; who can think of his preſent ſtate with compoſure, reflect on the paſt with conſcious approbation, and look forwards with joy to that important future hour, when he ſhall appear before God, and humbly offer to him a whole life ſpent in his Service.

FINIS.

BRITANNICVM